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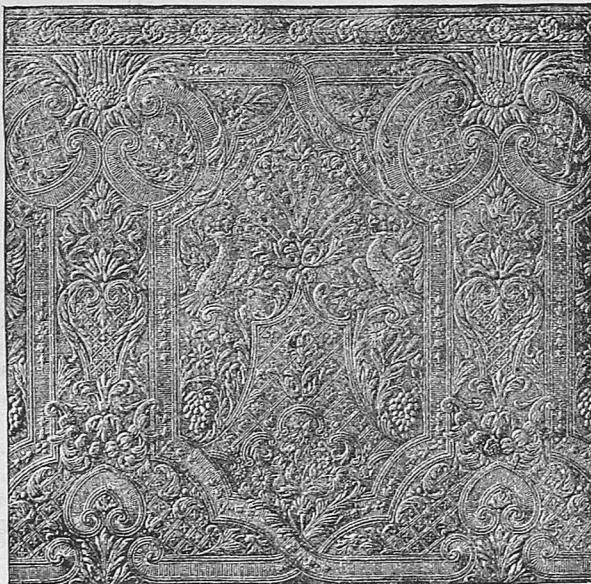
#### VENETIAN LEATHERS.

WHETHER the art of embossing and decorating leathers for wall hangings and similar purposes of interior ornament originated with the Moors, the Spaniards or the Venetians, is still a mooted question; but whoever were its founders, the development of the industry and trade covered several centuries both in Italy and Spain, reaching its fullest perfection in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Venetian and Cordovan leather was imported into France, England and



GRENoble FRIEZE.

Flanders as early as the fifteenth century, and, on account of its low tones, it was found to harmonize perfectly with the richly-carved oaken rafters, panelling and wainscoting against which it was placed in the apartments of that period. In this connection it may be remarked that the extended modern use of so many materials, which are more or less imitative of leather hangings, is a natural expression of the desire for something truly artistic and congruous, and a revolt against the flat papers that have so long held sway. We have arrived at last so far towards a realization of that favorite syllogism, "the appreciation of the beautiful," that even those unversed in the technique of the decorator's art are enabled to detect the

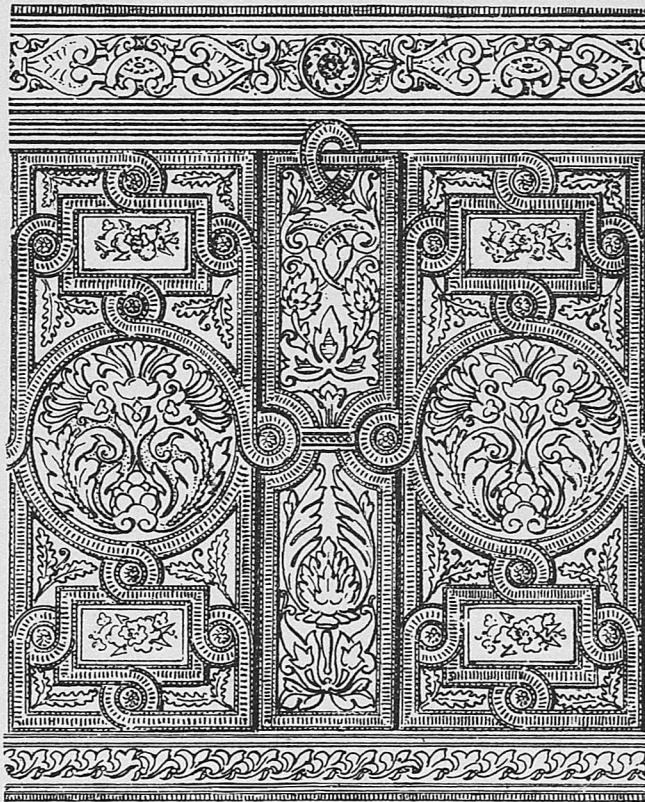


VENETIAN DADO.

anachronism of an apartment, mediævally treated as to its cabinetwork, having upon its walls the ordinary printed wallpaper of commerce.

The great charm of these ancient stamped leathers was their beauty of design, their richness of coloring, their boldness

of execution, their variety of pattern and their great durability, as they resisted the effects of dampness, gathered little dust, and were not subject to the ravages of insects. Such few old Leathers as are now to be found in the galleries of art museums, the cabinets of collectors and the warerooms of curio dealers, bear testimony to their beauty, even after the lapse of centuries. The best modern reproduction of these rare old leathers is now being imported into this country by the American Decorative Company, of Boston, and these "Venetian leathers" can with difficulty be distinguished, either as to design, coloring or feeling, from the genuine hand-made leathers of centuries ago. In the main the designs are literal copies of old Spanish, French and Italian leather hangings, and the treatment, by secret processes, controlled by this company, gives to the material the exact leather hue and nearly as



MADRID DADO.

much toughness as was possessed by the originals. The manufacture of these magnificent hangings is at present carried on by one establishment in Europe only, and among the stock carried by the American Decorative Company are some grand designs imported by them from this European manufactory, comprising in particular some splendid dado patterns a full yard in width.

Of course, these superb goods are not to be put forward chiefly on the ground of cheapness, though as compared with any modern production of real leathers, or with any of the better class of imitations of leathers, their price is very low, but they are confidently offered to the public and the decorative trade, who can appreciate and who desire a truly artistic and satisfying material as the best, the most enduring, and—quality considered—the cheapest wall decoration on the market.